

## Wind Sprints: Shorter Essays

**Joseph Epstein**

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*This collection is the perfect introduction to the erudite and entertaining work of a prolific essayist.*

Noted writer Joseph Epstein offers a smorgasbord of wit in the collection *Wind Sprints: Shorter Essays*.

With *Wind Sprints*, Axios continues its series of Epstein essay collections, following *Essays in Biography* and *A Literary Education*. This time, the collection consists mostly of essays originally written for the *Weekly Standard* over the course of nearly twenty years. In *Wind Sprints*, Epstein's essays run approximately 800 words each, and while that might not leave as much room for details, expansion, and tangents as some might prefer, it's perfect for the less consequential, but by no means less entertaining, topics addressed. Even limited in length, Epstein has plenty of opportunities to showcase his distinctive, erudite style.

Considering the number of essays included (143 in all), there's surprisingly little repetition of subjects or verbiage. Reading these essays is like listening to a relative with loads of experience, who manages to take every story or opinion and boil it down to the bare necessities.

Reading these essays in succession also provides a portrait of the author that might be otherwise unavailable: his preferences, his peccadilloes, and the adaptations of a literary man to such 21st-century phenomena as the cell phone and the Kindle, to say nothing of changes in language itself. Other topics range from food to politics to childhood recollections. In the essay "It's Only A Hobby," Epstein examines the integration of writing into the rest of his life:

*A writer's life tends to be seamless, and he doesn't divide it between work and leisure ... The writer's work and his play, if he is lucky, are one.*

These lines serve as a good summary of *Wind Sprints*: free-flowing Epstein, on the subjects that arise in everyday life, merging the literary with the quotidian in inimitable fashion. *Wind Sprints* would make an enjoyable read for fans of Epstein's other essay collections, and for the uninitiated, it is a perfect introduction.

PETER DABBENE (Spring 2016)

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